Imposters: A New Piece of Evidence for Local vs. Non-local Persons Contrast

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Collins and Postal (2012) discuss *imposters*, notionally *n* person DPs which are grammatically *m* person, where $n \neq m$. Imposters gives rise to utterances that show alternations in pronominal phi-feature values that do not correlate with differences in meaning or truth conditions (1).

(1) Your Majesty / you / his majesty should leave.

As seen in (2)a, some imposters are able to bind elements that share either their grammatically expressed phi-features or those associated with their interpretation. In other cases, as in (2)b, only binding of elements that share their grammatically expressed phi-features is possible.

(2) a. Your$_1$ Majesty should praise yourself$_1$/himself$_1$
    b. His$_1$ Majesty should praise *yourself$_1$/himself$_1$

In this talk, we provide an account of this contrast, building on the imposter-operator based analysis proposed in Podobryaev (2014). We further show that our analysis extends beyond phi-features on nominal elements (reflexives, pronouns) to phi-features underlying verbal agreement. The empirical pattern that we observe suggests that verbal phi-features associated with local persons (1st and 2nd) are interpretable, while non-local persons are not.

Podobryaev (2014) proposes an account of DP interpretation under which phi-features are semantically interpreted: 1st person features on a DP are necessarily result in the DP being interpreted as the speaker, while 2nd person features give rise to a hearer interpretation. 3rd person features typically are associated with an individual that is neither speaker nor hearer, as a result of blocking by a more specific form. To account for the mismatch between hearer interpretation and the use of the 3rd person reflexive *himself* in (2)a, Podobryaev posits the existence of an operator that is optionally introduced by an imposter. In this case, this H(earer)-imposter, *your majesty*, licenses the operator ⊛, which renders 2nd person pronouns undefined in its scope, and thereby allows 3rd person pronouns to be used to refer to the hearer as an "elsewhere" form. Because of the 2nd person pronoun in the imposter itself, this operator must not c-command the imposter, as it would render this pronoun uninterpretable. For cases where the bound pronoun is 2nd person, following Podobryaev, we assume that there is no operator. For (2)b, the pronoun within the imposter is 3rd person, but is interpreted as referring to the hearer. Therefore, this imposter requires the presence of a c-commanding operator, leading to the correct prediction that 2nd person pronouns are impossible in such cases. The generality of this analysis of the English contrast between (1) and (2) is supported by the fact that the contrast is replicated cross-linguistically, in Turkish and Albanian.

(3) a. Zatıaliniz   kendine /kendinize   güveniyor.   (Turkish)
       your highness   himself /yourself   trust.3

    b. Zatıalleri   kendine /*kendinize   güveniyor.
       his highness   himself /yourself   trust.3

(4) a. Madhëria Juaj   do votojë   për   idetë tuaja   / e saj   (Albanian)
       highness yours.2PL   will vote.3SG for   ideas yours.2PL / hers

    b. Madhëria e Saj   do votojë   për   *idetë tuaja   / e saj
       highness hers.3SG   will vote.3SG for   ideas yours.2PL / hers

Turkish (5) and Albanian (6) differ from English in allowing both 3rd person, and 1st and 2nd person verbal agreement with the S(peaker) and Hearer-imposters, respectively.

(5) Zatıaliniz   çok   yorgun-Ø /-sunuz.   (6) Mami   shko**n** / shko**j**   tani.
    your highness   very   tired-3 /-2   mommy.the   go.PR.3 / go.PR.1   now
    'Your highness is very tired.' *(H-imposter)*   'Mommy is going (away) now.' *(S-imposter)*

However, the presence of a 3rd person pronoun within the imposter blocks the possibility of 2nd person phi-features (7). This pattern follows from our assumptions if we take the distribution of a verbal 2nd person (and 1st person) phi-features to be governed by the same restrictions as their nominal counterparts, namely semantic interpretability. As a result, we conclude that verbal local person phi-features are pronominal (Borer 1986, Alexiadou and Anagnastopoulou 1998) and are interpreted by the assignment function at LF.

(7) Zatıalleri   çok   yorgun-Ø /* -sunuz.
    his highness   very   tired-3 /-2
    'His highness is very tired.'

If our analysis is on the right track, we expect an interaction between the occurrence of person phi-features on the verb and those on the bound pronoun. This is exactly what is found in both Turkish and Albanian: as seen in (8)a-b, when the verbal agreement is 2nd person, indicating the absence of an imposter operator, a bound 3rd person pronoun, whose interpretation would require such an operator, is impossible. We might expect that an analogous pattern would be found with 3rd person verbal agreement: such agreement would implicate an imposter operator, rendering impossible a bound 2nd person in its scope. Though such cases are marked, as seen in the contrast in (8)c-d, they are not as ill-formed as (8)b.

(8) a.   Zatıaliniz   ödev-iniz-i   bitir-di-niz
       your highness   homework-**2POSS**-ACC finish-PAST-**2**
       'Your highness finished.**2 your** homework.'

    b.   *Zatıaliniz   ödev-i-ni   bitir-di-niz
        your highness   homework-**3POSS**-ACC finish-PAST-**2**

    c.   Zatıaliniz   ödev-i-ni   bitir-di-Ø
       your highness   homework-**3POSS**-ACC finish-PAST-**3**

    d.   ?Zatıaliniz   ödev-iniz-i   bitir-di-Ø
       your highness   homework-**2POSS**-ACC finish-PAST-**3**

A similar pattern is found across clause boundaries. While 2nd person agreement on the main verb, which indicates the absence of an imposter operator, is incompatible with 3rd person pronouns in the embedded clause, the reverse is possible. Consider (9) and (10).

(9)   *zatıaliniz   sonuçlar-ı-nın   fikirler-i-ni   destekle-diğ-ini   düşünüyor-sunuz.
       your highness   results-3POSS-GEN   ideas-3POSS-ACC   support-NMLZ-ACC   think.2
       'Your highness thinks.**2** that **his** conclusions support **his** ideas.'

(10)   zatıaliniz   sonuçlar-ınız-ın   fikirler-iniz-i   destekle-diğ-ini   düşünüyor.
       your highness   results-2POSS-GEN   ideas-2POSS-ACC   support-NMLZ-ACC think.3
       'Your highness thinks.**3** that **your** conclusions support **your** ideas.'

Collins and Postal (2012) and Podobryaev (2014) report cases in English with multiple bound pronouns with distict person features that pattern similarly. We take these pattern to indicate that 3rd person verbal phi-features differ from local persons in that they are not interpretable.

    The covariation between verbal and pronominal agreement is expected only under the assumption that the imposter operator must be in some sense local to the imposter. If it were to adjoin directly to the object DP in (8)b, it could license the third person features on the hearer-interpreted reflexive without affecting the interpretation of the verbal phi-features. In the talk, we explore the nature of this locality relation. We note, however, that the degree of locality appears to vary across languages. While (11) is possible both in English and Turkish, presumably because the imposter subject licenses an operator below the subject that c-commands the verb and the embedded clause (cf. the analysis of (2)a), (12) is acceptable only in English.

(11)   zatıaliniz   sonuçlar-ı-nın   fikirler-i-ni   destekle-diğ-ini   düşünüyor.
       your highness   results-3POSS-GEN   ideas-3POSS-ACC   support-NMLZ-ACC think.3
       'Your highness thinks.**3** that **his** conclusions support **his** ideas.'

(12)   *zatıalinizin üniversitesi sonuçlar-ı-nın   fikirler-i-ni   destekle-diğ-ini   düşünüyor.
       your highness' university results-3POSS-GEN   ideas-3POSS-ACC   support-NMLZ-ACC think.3
       'Your highness' university thinks.**3** that **his** conclusions support **his** ideas.'

We argue that this is due to a stricter locality condition observed in Turkish between the operator and the imposter. To sum up, we have argued for an imposter-operator analyis, which extends beyond phi-features on nominal elements to verbal phi-features. We suggest that the empirical pattern constitutes another piece of evidence for the distinction between local persons (1st and 2nd) and non-local persons, in that the former are interpretable, while the latter are not, in the verbal domain.